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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 000278

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SUBJECT: DALAI LAMA REQUESTS SECRETARY TO PROMOTE CALM IN CHINA

Classified By: Ambassador David Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

¶1. (C) Summary. In a February 13 farewell meeting, the Ambassador sought the Dalai Lama's views on the Secretary's upcoming visit to Beijing. The Dalai Lama underlined that neither Tibetan leaders nor the PRC would like a repeat of last year's violence. Consequently, he suggested the Secretary should urge the PRC to stand down and remain calm through the March 10 period of the 50th anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising and the Dalai Lama's escape to India. The Dalai Lama advised that a long-term U.S. strategy of engagement with the PRC should seek a more open China that can one day be brought into the "mainstream of world democracies." End Summary.

"Strike Hard" Hazard

¶2. (C) The February 13 meeting between the Ambassador and the Dalai Lama occurred amidst reports of violence during the PRC's "strike hard" campaign. The Dalai Lama's Representative Tempa Tsering told the Ambassador that the situation in Tibet has worsened significantly, citing reports of plain-clothes police and paramilitary forces arresting over 5,000 Tibetans during midnight raids. The number of detainees has swamped the capacity of prisons and detention centers, leading the PRC to hold new detainees in schools and army barracks. Tsering also divulged that the PRC's revised reeducation program now seeks to require monks to sign a document that accuses the Dalai Lama of instigating the March 2008 riots.

¶3. (C) The Dalai Lama augmented Tsering's reports with a readout from a recent meeting with 50 newly-arrived Tibetans from China. The recent arrivals confirmed reports of heightened tensions, expressing greatest anxiety about the sense of anger within the entire Tibetan community, "even the children." The Tibetans also described omnipresent heavily armed Chinese soldiers who walk around "with their fingers on the triggers" of their weapons. Given this atmosphere of fear and oppression, the Dalai Lama warned that "an uprising could happen at any moment...this is not good."

Dalai Lama to Secretary Clinton: Please Promote Calm

¶4. (C) The Dalai Lama pressed that the "immense suffering" caused by last year's riots should not be repeated and observed that Tibetan leaders and the PRC share the same concern regarding the possibility of another uprising. He requested that during her upcoming visit to Beijing the Secretary urge the Chinese government to maintain a "cool head" during the heightened tensions and advised that the "immediate solution" should be to "promote calm." The exiled

Tibetan leader advised China to use logic, instead of appeals to force, during this sensitive period.

Changing China? -----

15. (C) The Ambassador observed that the economic downturn provides the context for the long-term U.S. strategy for engaging China. It has altered the dynamics of the U.S.-China relationship, reminding the PRC that the U.S. and China have a mutual interest in each other's economic prosperity. Suggesting that now may be an opportune time to restructure how the U.S. frames its human rights dialogue with China, the Dalai Lama declared that the Tibetans' goal is a more transparent China with greater personal freedom as the natural outcome long-term of a rising market economy. He urged the U.S. and India to bring China into "the mainstream of world democracies -- a more democratic China is in everyone's interest." He commented that there is no future in totalitarianism -- "communism with capitalism is impossible" and noted China had retained the worst of both worlds: the rigidity of communism coupled with the corruption of capitalism. The Ambassador acknowledged the inherent tensions within the PRC, commenting that the kind of economy China wants requires increasing degrees of personal freedom and suggesting that over time the powers of greater freedom will assert themselves.

16. (C) The Dalai Lama emphasized that the U.S. and other countries should send a "clear signal" to China that unless the PRC "realistically" addresses the Tibet issue, it will

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not "go away." The Ambassador predicted that the new administration will not limit its view of the bilateral relationship to an economic or military prism. He observed that the Secretary's visit to Beijing early in her tenure augers well for a renewal of engagement with the PRC on multiple fronts.

MULFORD